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AUTHOR Paulsell, Patricia R.
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ABSTRACT

Introduction of materials designed to heighten the cultural awareness of students intending to work in international business is a more difficult task than introducing cultural material to language students, due to lack of appropriate texts and methods and the limited international awareness of students. The importance of cultural understanding to the success of international business requires that every thematic unit covered in the business German classroom reflect a highly sophisticated cross-cultural analysis component. Discussion of stereotypes is an effective way of impressing on students the effect of imposing their cultural values on others. The anthropologist Edward T. Hall's theory of the integration of technical, formal, and informal levels of culture is well adapted to the business context and useful for the kind of cross-cultural analysis needed. Themes such as territoriality, authority, privacy, sex discrimination, and aspects of language use can be studied in the framework of Hall's theory to illustrate the levels and impact of culture in the German business and economic environment. Practical suggestions for incorporating cross-cultural themes into business German thematic units are included, and Hall's diagram representing the interactions of the various facets of culture is appended. (MSE)

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ESTABLISHING A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS COMPONENT IN BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

By

PATRICIA R. PAULSELL

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISITCS & GERMANIC, SLAVIC, ASIAN AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

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ESTABLISHING A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS COMPONENT IN BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

by
Patricia R. Paulsell
Michigan State University

The development of sensitivity in business foreign language students regarding, on a larger scale, the cultural factors underlying the development of whole economic systems, and, on a smaller scale, individual business transactions, is not always given the attention it deserves. Focus upon this aspect of the students' education is particularly important here in the United States where our insular society so often produces students with very little global awareness. Students who are interested in business and related professions often come to a college or university ill prepared to enter careers in the international arena. Their deficit in the area of international studies is only rarely addressed by courses in business and professional departments. Traditionally, American students learn about foreign cultures in foreign language classrooms. Thus, if students are to be prepared to lead successful careers in international business, it becomes the task of the business foreign language instructor to introduce students to cultural factors affecting the business environment of the target language.

Although foreign language teachers are accustomed to introducing "culture and civilization" studies at varying levels of sophistication in first,

second, and third year language classes, the task of introducing similar materials designed to heighten the cultural awareness of students who intend to work in the international business environment proves a more difficult task. Certainly one of the most important factors determining the difficulty of this task is the lack of appropriate textbooks developed specifically for the internationally naive American student. The textbooks which have been available to us have, for the most part, been produced in Germany for heterogeneous groups of foreign students and are intended to be used in classrooms in Germany. Not only do most of these foreign students have a higher level of international awareness than the average American student, but, should any insufficiency in their international education exist, business German teachers in Germany have the advantage of being surrounded by the target environment. If the student, for instance, has no knowledge of the German banking system, there is probably a bank just down the street where students may be taken for first-hand experience. Thus, these textbooks do not address themselves to the unique situation represented by the American classroom where a homogeneous student group with a particularly low level of international awareness is learning the language far from the countries in which it is spoken. This analysis is as true for outdated textbooks such as Bäumchen's Deutsche Wirtschaftssprache für Ausländer as it is for the far superior Fachsprache Wirtschaft text of the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft. Such texts simply take too much background information for granted and are therefore useful only to a limited extent in the American classroom. On the purely thematic level, for instance, how does one begin to talk about Germany's

central importance in the European Economic Community, when the average American student has only the most vague notion of what the EEC is? As far as cultural differences are concerned, these textbooks offer the business German instructor in the United States absolutely no teaching aids. The lack of published materials specifically designed for our classrooms on both the purely thematic and cultural level has led many of us to search for our own materials---cutting, pasting, and photocopying our way to a body of materials which we feel fits the peculiar needs of our students.

The search for the appropriate materials to study certain thematic units in the realm of business and economics, such as the banking system, labor-management relations, or the economic geography of the Federal Republic has always been difficult, but has nevertheless proven more fruitful than the search for a viable method to introduce cultural awareness into the business German classroom. After some reading in the appropriate bibliographies one eventually arms onesself with the only traditionally available published materials which even remotely touch upon the subject, that is: the Atlantik-Brücke publications <u>These Strange German Ways</u>, and <u>Meeting German Business</u>. The inevitable question after having perused these booklets is, "Was soll ich denn damit anfangen?" Even the in many respects commendable new addition to the business German textbook market, Doris Fulda Merrifield's <u>Deutsche Wirschaftssprache für Amerikaner</u>, does not address the problem of cultural awareness in the business environment in a systematic way. She mentions in her preface her indebtedness to one of the aforementioned booklets[1] and, in a subsection of her last chapter, includes a reading passage

describing some German customs which could be of particular importance in an office setting. Once again, however, one is confronted with a listing of the "do's and don'ts" of business etiquette, i.e. that the American in a German office should not expect to be on immediate "du" terms with German co-workers, that the German handshake differs qualitatively and quantitatively from the American, and, most important of all, "Zu einer privaten Einladung kommt man mit Blumen oder Pralinen für die Hausfrau."[2] This catalog of customs which should not be overlooked by the visitor who wishes to make a good impression in Germany is followed by an exercise in which the student is to read a short narration concerning an American who is invited to a party. After reading the passage, the student is to comment upon what the American guest did wrong. A somewhat more successfully designed exercise, in my opinion, is the one which follows. Here the author has reprinted the text of an interview with a German business executive. In the interview the executive compares and contrasts his experiences in the German and American business environments. He introduces some of the fundamental cultural differences which create communication problems in cross-cultural business relations.[3] With this exercise and the questions which follow it, I feel, the author has approached the problem of establishing a cross-cultural analysis component in her textbook. Unfortunately, since this is the only chapter in the book which deals with cross-cultural communication problems in any depth, this new text lacks a systematic approach to the problem.

Considering the abominable lack of international awareness in our students, on the one hand, and the overwhelming importance of cultural

understanding to the success of international business dealings on the other hand, I feel that it is essential that every thematic unit covered in the business German classroom reflect a highly sophisticated cross-cultural analysis component which goes beyond the Du/Sie-handshake syndrome. This cross-cultural analysis component should be considered an important part of the course syllabus and should be justified to the students very early in the course. It is important to begin by impressing upon the students the impact that the internalization of their own cultural values has upon their judgment of other peoples and cultures. This can be accomplished in a lively way with a discussion of stereotypes. With the aid of slides or overhead projections to present cartoon representations of the American stereotype of the "typical German," I ask my students to list what they feel most Americans would designate as the main characterisitics of "Germans." In a general classroom discussion, one will usually elicit something similar to the following list:

Germans:

1. love beer
2. wear Lederhosen and funny hats with feathers
3. export mainly cars, wine, and coo-coo clocks.
4. speak a gutteral language which is not as pretty or important as French
5. are clean, neat, and orderly
6. can be rigid and militaristic

Since many of these students (now in their third year of German study) have enough second-hand experience from their textbooks or first-hand experience from having travelled to Germany to know that the stereotype is extremely naive, the next step is to introduce them to a listing such as the following, taken from interviews with American business men who have travelled to

Germany on business.[4]

TWO AMERICAN VIEWS OF GERMANS

From those who know the language:	From those who do not know the language:
friendly	unfriendly
disciplined	undisciplined
self-contained	just like us
very well educated	no taste
perfectionists	efficient
difficult to make friendships with	standoffish
meticulous about appointments	
systematic	stubborn
neat and orderly	
well-organized	
procedures-oriented	dominated by regulations
fair to a fault	
good businessmen	
play hard ball	
tough competitors	
somewhat secretive	never tell you anything
protective of privacy	
eager to do right	afraid of making mistakes
quality-oriented	quality conscious
can be very creative	intellectually rigid

The list on the left, of course, reveals the somewhat deeper understanding of the German mentality which is attainable through control of the language. Yet, both lists still reveal that value judgments about German behavior are being made using standards which have been internalized from a different cultural background. This internalization is fully revealed when even those who know

the language characterize the Germans as "tough competitors" who "know how to play hardball." At this point one must question not only the origin of stereotypes in general, but also the value judgments revealed in such characterizations by members of one culture concerning members of another culture whose cultural foundation differs from their own. All individuals sharing a particular culture possess a cultural grid through which information about the rules governing their interactions with each other is processed. When, for instance, Americans impose their set of values upon German behavior , they often misinterpret the significance of the behavior. Students must learn that simply learning the language is not sufficient to properly communicate in a foreign country; the culture itself <u>is</u> a means of communication which must be mastered if one wishes to be successful in social intercourse of any kind. As foreign language teachers we are, of course, fully aware that intimate knowledge of a foreign culture can only come through direct and prolonged contact with that culture. Within the classroom setting we can only hope to raise the students' level of consciousness to the point that they become more receptive to cultural cues.

Whereas stereotypes are relatively easy to deal with because they result from rigid notions which admit no individuality, the concept of culture is far more difficult to define. What is culture? A definition which is frequently used in "culture and civilization" courses would include the music, art, literature, and philosophic systems of a particular people. The definition used by those writing introductory and intermediate language texts, however, frequently goes beyond these more formal categories to include the level of

familiar customs, such as store hours and shopping habits, from the everyday life of the average person. Both levels belong to the sphere of "culture" in the broadest sense, but how are the two to be integrated and what aspects of such an integrated view of culture are particularly important for the German business environment?

One theory which addresses the integration of the various levels of culture and, at the same time, has proven particularly well adapted to the business environment, is that proposed by anthropologist Edward T. Hall. According to Hall, each facet of culture has three levels, the formal, informal, and technical. Although we will look at these levels separately in order to better understand the mechanism of culture, it should be remembered that they are not independent of one another. All three levels are simultaneously present in differing degrees of domination in any facet of culture. The formal and informal levels are subsumed by many other anthropologists under the term "implicit," whereas the technical level is considered the "explicit" manifestation of culture. Each person internalizes the formal level of the culture very early in life through the precepts and admonitions of adult mentors. The formal level includes all of those behavior codes which are of a binary, that is "yes-no" character. There is no alternative behavior which is acceptable. For instance, the admonition that one does not steal belongs in the category of formal cultural learning.[5] The informal level is characterized by its somewhat less rigid nature and by the fact that the agent of transmission is a model used for imitation. On this level one simply learns through contact with peers. An excellent example would be the acquiring of knowledge about

sexual behavior, which, to a large extent, is accumulated from experience, even in this age of sexual revolution.[6] The technical level is differentiated by the fact that it is almost exclusively transmitted in explicit terms from teacher to student, orally or in writing. The technical level is the farthest removed from emotional involvement; the informal level is suffused with somewhat more emotion and the formal level is highly emotionally charged.[7] Technical behavior is the most explicit and fully conscious behavior, with the informal existing on the periphery of awareness, and the formal existing just out of awareness, having become implicit.

Each level of cultural awareness presents its own particular set of problems for the outsider who wishes to become conversant with the culture. It is the technical level of a culture which is the easiest for an outsider to approach and learn. In addition, members of the culture are not disturbed by an outsider's misunderstanding or misinterpetation of facets of the culture at this level. The outsider is simply considered to be misinformed. Beyond this technical level, however, outsiders will meet with far greater difficulty, both in their attempt to understand the culture and in the reaction of insiders, should the outsiders' behavior be deemed inappropriate. As Hall points out, "mishandling the informal [level] can often lead to serious difficulties which are apt to become aggravated since the participants in an informal situation are not fully conscious of what is going on. They only know that under a certain set of unstated rules they can act in a certain way and depend upon other people to react appropriately. This informal expectancy is often ruptured when there is a conflict between two patterns..." in a cross-cultural situation.[8] The

breach of informal codes of behavior on the part of the outsider is met with a far more emotional response by the insiders who may or may not forgive the breach, depending on their own level of cross-cultural awareness. It is the formal level, however, which presents the most formidable barrier to the outsider's desire to understand a foreign culture. The formal level is the very core of culture, "the base from which the rest of culture springs and around which it is built." [9] This cultural core is the most tenacious, the most resistant to change, and the most closely analogous to instinct. "Since the formal is seldom recognized as such," to quote Hall again, " the American abroad often has the impression that other people's formal systems are unnecessary, immoral, crazy, backward, or a remnant of some outworn value that America gave up some time ago." [10]

Thus, not only the outsiders' reactions to a certain behavior in the foreign culture, but also the insiders' reactions to breaches of the codes for this behavior on the part of the outsider, become more emotional and visceral as one passes from the technical, through the informal to the formal levels. This is a particularly important point which should be stressed when discussing the nature of culture in the business German classroom. For, the stronger the feeling on the part of the student that a particular behavior exhibited by the Germans is unnecessary or somehow backward, the higher is the possibility that the behavior is part of the formal core of German culture or that it represents a breach of the formal core of American culture. These students must learn to deal with all three levels of culture, but, if they are to be successful in international business careers, their most difficult and

important task will be in overcoming their most emotional responses with regard to German behavior patterns. While it is not possible within the confines of any business German classroom to introduce every possible facet of German culture which impacts upon the business and economic environment of even one German-speaking country, I think that it is possible to raise the level of consiousness of these students to a degree which will make it possible for them to deal effectively with even the most complex cultural situations. The first step in that process of consciousness-raising can be dealt with by discussing stereotypes and their formation; the second step should involve a presentation of the nature and complexity of culture itself. The third and final step is to apply this knowledge to the environment of German business and economics, using carefully chosen examples of the manifestations of culture within the thematic units chosen by the instructor.

In presenting to the students the various manifestations of culture within the world of German business and economics, I have found it helpful to use a diagram[11] from Edward T. Hall's The Silent Language as a point of departure. (See Appendix) We note that this diagram not only presents the various facets of culture, but the interactions of these facets at all levels with one another, reflecting the complexity of the concept of culture in general. Around the outside, in the first, that is to say "technical" layer, we find the aspects of language, government, occupations and professions, dress and behavior of men and women, boundaries, time measurement, education, games, religious ceremonies, military defenses, health practices, and technology. These represent, therefore, the aspects of culture which will be

the easiest for the instructor to present and for the student to understand. When we insert the German business and economic environment into these sectors, we indeed find, for the most part, the most frequently occurring thematic areas of business German textbooks. The vocabulary of business and technical German, the apparatus of the government which controls business and economics in Germany, the types and proliferation of various occupations and professions, the nature of the formal educational system, the health care system--all are recognizable aspects of the business German core curriculum. Very few textbooks venture into the realms of the informal and formal aspects of the cultural spectrum, however, into the sectors of the silent language (i.e. gesture and tone of voice), into deeply imbedded ideas of class hierarchy, of economic structure, of sexually determined hierarchies in the workplace, of space relations, of attitudes toward time and concepts of comfort.

Edward T. Hall has recently ventured into these areas, however, with a new booklet, entitled Hidden Differences: Studies in International Communication. How to communicate with the Germans. This addition to Hall's insightful works in the area of cross-cultural studies deals specifically with the deeper levels of cultural understanding within the German business and economic environment. There are a few occasions in this analysis of the aspects of German culture when Hall's conclusions seem to be based on superficial and highly subjective impressions of German language and behavior. For instance, in discussing German "communicative style," Hall remarks, "With the verb at the end of the sentence it takes a while for the Germans to get to the point...Keep in mind that in communicating to Germans you must repeat your

main point at the end or your listener may miss it...The German language is much more literal than English...Each German word has a specific meaning and it is important to choose your words precisely.... The English and German languages are also different in the way they incorporate new technological words. Since the Germans tend toward understatement and are far more direct, they use simple terms like Fernsprecher ("far speaker") for telephone and Fernseher ("far see-er") for television."[12] If such statements had been made toward the beginning of the booklet and had I not known Hall's reputation as an anthropologist and respected it, I would have been discouraged in reading any further. He seems to have applied the value judgments of an outsider to the German setting, thereby falling into the very trap which in other books he has warned against. Hall is at his best when he stays within the more anthropologically oriented areas of his analysis; his background in Germanic linguistics appears insufficient, but his observations of German behavior in other areas are usually accurate. With certain reservations, therefore, I would like to recommend Hidden Differences as a helpful tool in the identification of the potential impact of certain German cultural patterns in the German business and economic system.

I would like to conclude my presentation with some practical suggestions for the incorporation of a cross-cultural component into business German thematic units. Before approaching this cross-cultural analysis with respect to the business environment, let us return to Hall's diagram representing the aspects of human activity. Since time does not permit that I deal with each aspect, I will choose only three for our present discussion.

Our first example comes within the area marked "Territoriality" in the general diagram. An excellent business German thematic area into which the concept of territoriality can be incorporated is that of "Führungstechniken" or Management systems and styles, which should include a presentation on the hierarchy of management within the German firm. In this unit one can present a flow chart, preferably one from a currently operational firm, showing the typical chain of command in traditional German management. One will see, if one does not already know from first-hand experience, that German business is typically highly compartmentalized and lines of authority are rigorously defined. As Hall explains, "Key people must be informed about all developments and any major decision must go to the top for approval. Usually there are two or three officials in a medium or large company whose approval is required for these decisions, and this naturally creates bottlenecks."[13] One must not bypass levels of authority (Instanzen) in the typical German chain of command, which is a line authority system. Americans often complain after having worked for several months in a German business that areas of authority are jealously guarded and that there is little if any of the informal communication between departments typical of the organization of medium sized American firms. Such informal contact may not even involve the higher level managers themselves and seems, to Americans, to facilitate the decision-making process because it eliminates the need to discuss the same problems concerning the project repeatedly in different departments. These two completely different ways of regarding the decision-making process and its relationship to the lines of authority within business have often been the source of cross-cultural

misunderstanding between German and American businessmen. To this point our discussion has remained at the technical cultural level, that is, on the level of the description of specific boundaries within the aspect of territoriality. The information is explicitly available to us; we can see it, simply by reading the organizational flow chart. The Americans' reaction, however, to experiences within this system is likely to be that the Germans are "too rigid" and that their management system is "backward" and encumbered by too many trappings of authority. At this point, we begin to see the more emotional response characterisitic of a lack of attention to the more implicit core aspects.

From Hall's diagram we note that these formal and informal aspects within "Territoriality" define implicitly accepted values regarding space relations on both a personal and more general level. "Basic to any understanding of German behavior," Hall writes," is the role played by decentralization and compartmentalization, both prominent structural features of the culture. These elements can be seen at all levels in the society from the individual at home or in his office to the organizational level in the business hierarchy."[14] One major point of cultural differentiation between Germans and Americans involves attitudes toward and handling of space. The geographical crowding which Germans experience may be an explanation of their territoriality, Hall explains. But, whatever the deeper explanations may entail, for the German, space is far more sacred than for the American. The value of space to the German reveals itself in everyday life as the "cherished privacy" discussed in the booklet <u>These Strange German Ways.</u> Here one is presented with a few cartoon pictures representing the occurrence of "more closed

doors," and "more fences between homes" which are characteristic of German life.[15] This information, by itself, is difficult to incorporate into a business German thematic unit. With the use of Hall's cultural aspects and levels, however, it is somewhat easier to follow the implications of the cultural core in the area of territoriality and apply them to the business environment. The fact that space is so sacred in the German culture leads to a compartmentalization which reveals itself in the hierarchical structure of most German firms.

The importance of privacy in German culture may also be carried over into a thematic unit dealing with the various forms of incorporation in the Federal Republic. This particular material lends itself, first of all, on the technical level to comparative/contrastive examination, because there are significant differences between the rules for incorporation between the United States and the Federal Republic. These rules are explicit and quite understandable from the presentation of tables. After the students have acquired an understanding of the surface differences between the two systems, I introduce the results of a survey of German business executives which appeared several years ago in Fortune magazine. In the interviews with these gentlemen it became apparent that they felt that there were many advantages to doing business in the United States in comparison to the Federal Republic. One of the disadvantages in their minds, however, lay in the far more strict publication requirements imposed upon American business by the government, particularly those requirements involving financial disclosure. In Germany, a greater percentage of companies are privately owned and closely held. Only

the largest companies are subject to the kind of government regulation or public disclosure characteristic of the United States. The business letter itself can offer an additional method of illustrating to students how deeply imbedded the value of privacy is in the German cultural core with regard to financial disclosure in business. In connection with a unit of the format of the German business letter, I have sometimes supplied the students with addresses of German firms to whom they must write for information, including a Jahresbericht. Among these addresses I have occasionally planted a few smaller, privately owned firms; the emotional responses in some of the answers to the queries provide convincing evidence that one has indeed struck a nerve on the formal cultural level!

Another common cross-cultural communication problem which will confront Americans working in Germany, and for which one can prepare the students before they leave the classroom environment, lies within the area of "Bisexuality" on Hall's diagram. Since my business German classes are, on the average, more than half female, I feel that this is an extremely important area which merits my attention. On the technical level, one can easily explain, for instance, the dress and behavior codes with which the American will be confronted in the German business environment, but I know that I must prepare all of my students for the reception of women in the German business world on the formal and informal levels of German culture. As we see from the diagram, the formal core of the "Bisexuality" wedge includes deeply ingrained values concerning the place of men and women in the society. As Hall points out in Hidden Differences, "German women have less status than American women" in

the business world. "Compared to the U.S., far fewer married women in Germany work outside the home and the percentage of German women in professions and business is far lower than in the United States. This is particularly true at the managerial level. There are a few women in positions of authority but they are the exception (only 16% of German executives are women)."[16] This situation can present a rude awakening for the American woman planning a career in international business who wishes to hone her skills overseas in positions of responsibility on a par with her male peers. It has been my experience that female interns whom I have placed with companies in Germany are frequently not taken as seriously as the males in their career objectives. In the first years of the internship program most of the German firms simply assumed that, if a female intern were assigned to them, she was to be given secretarial work. Her career goals were not taken seriously because the German male managers often assumed that these women were simply biding their time until a marriage which would take them out of the job market. I, with the help of some gifted and aggressive female students, have managed to overcome this deeply ingrained cultural bias at most of the firms who take part in our internship program, but these women will continue to fight for their place when they begin their career employment searches. I find that this cross-cultural communication problem can be well integrated into a unit dealing with the formalities of hiring and the interview process which preceeds it. Well-planned Rollenspielen can present the female student with a male "German" interviewer who will make her feel as though she were living in the pre-women's rights U.S. which may more closely resemble the average

German business executive's view of the role of women.

Leaving the wedge of "Bisexuality" in Hall's diagram, I would like to move next to the wedge entitled "Interaction." The technical level in this wedge is represented simply by language and, thus, this aspect of human activity can be represented in almost any area of the German business environment. A particularly rich area for the incorporation of the concept of "Interaction" in the context of cross-cultural communication is the realm of marketing and advertising. In my unit covering the latter, I first introduce all of the necessary vocabulary peculiar to German marketing and advertising; the students therefore have some experience with the technical level in this aspect of the culture as applied to an area of business and economics. As a final exercise for this unit, I hand out to the students, after having divided them into groups of 3 or 4, sets of both German and American magazine advertisements for certain popular products, such as automobiles, beer, and cigarettes, as well as services, such as insurance. Their task is to compare and contrast the sets of ads. Every group will report that the German ads are, for the most part, more factual and, to their tastes, overloaded with information. The emphasis in the German ads will be on quality, durability, and informative facts about the product. The American ads, on the other hand, will be characterized as far less wordy and more conscious of a superficial image which has been created for the product and which may have relatively little to do with the merits (or lack thereof) of the product itself. The most important ideas stressed in the American ads are "biggest," "greatest," or "newest." These differences in approach to magazine advertising reflect, however, the deeper formal level of

German culture within the "Interaction" wedge. In this instance, "Tone of voice" represents the German reaction to what they refer to as "American hype."

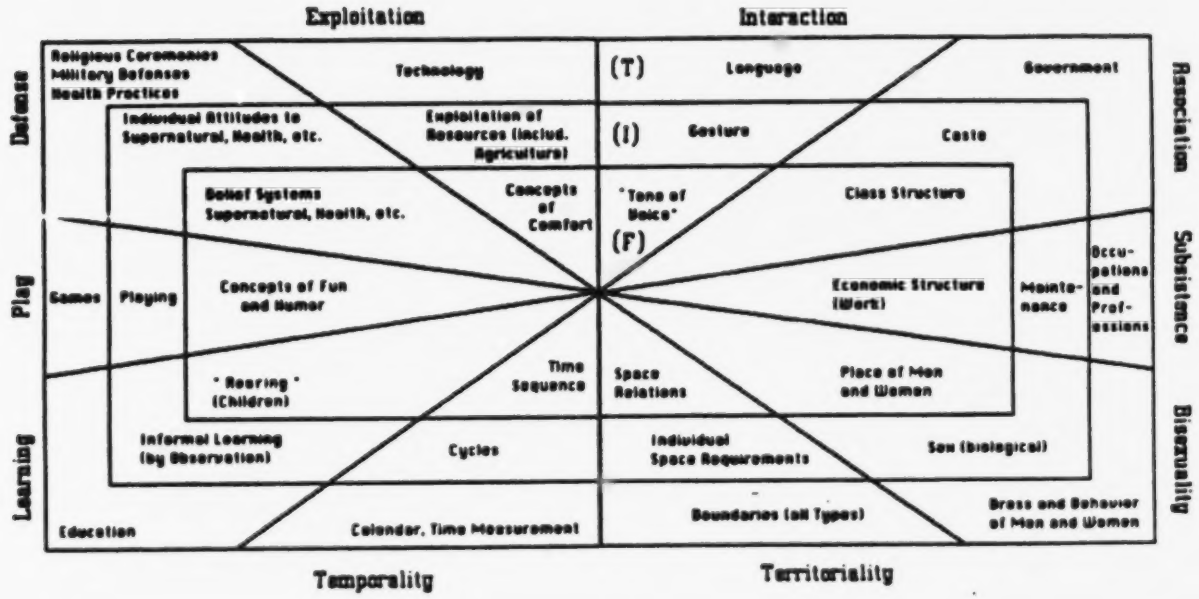
In Hidden Differences Hall quoted a German advertising executive as follows, "Americans make a big mistake because they're always talking about how this campaign is the biggest, greatest, or newest. But it's not the biggest, greatest or the newest. It's the same as last year's campaign, only talking about it as though it were entirely new. This makes a bad impression. The Germans get really tired of what you call 'hype.'" [17] This quotation is equally applicable if we change the word campaign to product--American products are always advertised as newer, or bigger, or better, when, in essence, the product has barely been changed, if at all. It is this "tone of voice," this "hype" in advertising which brings about a strong emotional response in the Germans and is responsible for failures of American products in the German market. In Germany products sell because of quality and price, not because of superficial "product image." McDonald's, for instance, spent millions trying to "do it their way" in Germany, trying to maintain their American "clean, wholesome, family" image at the "sign of the golden arches." They were only successful when they started serving beer.

One could continue to give examples of situations from the German business and economic environment which fit neatly into Hall's diagram and conveniently illustrate the technical, informal, and formal levels of culture as Hall has defined it. I hope, with my examples regarding management style and hierarchical structure, regulation of forms of incorporation, acceptance of

women in the business environment, and practices in advertisement, to have touched upon some of the most important areas in the realm of cross-cultural business communication problems. In addition, I hope that my presentation of practical methods for including a cross-cultural component into business German thematic units has been of help to colleagues who may have had some difficulty to date in incorporating this important dimension into course syllabi. In closing, I would like to reiterate that culture is a multi-leveled system of communication in which everything that people do, produce, and possess has meaning. Culture controls behavior in many deep and persistent ways and we should ensure that our students do not misunderstand the basic notions underlying this definition of culture. They must not make the mistake of assuming that "culture" is restricted to relatively superficial manners, a trap into which they often fall because of the presentations of culture with which they are familiar from the introductory and intermediate German language texts to which they have been exposed. It is important to present to them cultural differences on the deeper, structural levels and show them the effect of those deeper levels on behavior. Most importantly of all, students should learn that our culture represents the grid through which we see and make judgments about the world around us. One often hears the pronouncement that "people are people," i.e., innately the same all over the world. Nothing could be further from the truth, and the closer the two cultures seem to be on the surface, as with the American and German, the easier it is to miss the significance of those deeper "hidden differences." It is an understanding of such hidden dimensions which brings about true cross-cultural communication.

APPENDIX

The Formal (F), Informal (I), and Technical (T) Aspects of Human Activity



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NOTES

[1] Doris Fulda Merrifield, Deutsche Wirtscahftssprache für Amerikaner (New York: John Wiley &Sons, 1985), p. v.

[2] This catalog of customs occurs on pp. 130-134 of the Merrifield text.

[3] Merrifield, pp. 139-143.

[4] Edward T. Hall, Hidden Differences: Studies in International Communication. How to Communicate with the Germans. (Hamburg: Gruner + Jahr, 1983), p. 92.

[5] Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1973), pp. 68-69.

[6] Hall, Silent, pp. 69-70.

[7] Hall, Silent, p. 72.

[8] Hall, Silent, p. 82.

[9] Hall, Silent, p. 78.

[10] Hall, Silent, pp. 78-79.

[11] Hall, Silent, p. 95.

[12] Hall, Hidden, pp. 60-61.

[13] Hall, Hidden, p. 72.

[14] Hall, Hidden, p. 53.

15 These Strange German Ways, by Atlantik-Brücke, e.V. (Hamburg: Seehafen Verlag, 1980), p. 27.

16 Hall, Hidden, p. 75.

17 Hall, Hidden, p. 76.

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